GLOBAL CONNECTIONS AND EXCHANGE – UZBEKISTAN

PROGRAM NEWS   January 2006

Florida Teacher Bridges Cultural Gap Through Art

"Non vendor" by Robert Ponzio

Gainesville, Florida art teacher Robert Ponzio has emerged as one of Global Connections' most productive partners, through his classes' active participation in online projects which aim to introduce them to their Uzbekistan peers through the medium of creative artistic exchange. "I have been particularly interested in teaching my students about the history of the Silk Road and its significance to the development of world culture," remarked Ponzio about why he initiated this interaction. These projects allow "me to focus my student's attention on a region of the world that they typically know little about."

In a series of projects with schools in Nukus, Ferghana, and Andijan, Ponzio's classes at Oak Hall School have shared their personal perspectives on their life and surroundings with their counterparts by designing imaginative works stitched together from original photography and artwork. Additionally, Ponzio himself has contributed interpretations of Uzbek monuments and scenes based on images in an Uzbekistan travel guide. The Uzbekistan participants have responded in kind, making full use of electronic tools to forge a cross-border link that would have been impossible without their schools' Internet centers.

In the fall, Ponzio's classes embarked on the projects "How I See the World" with Nukus School No. 33 and "Class Collage" with Ferghana School No. 3 and Nukus School No. 11. In the former, Ponzio's senior high school students posted black and white photographs which illustrated aspects of their lives they wished to highlight. These ranged from whimsical depictions of leaping students to deeply reflective photos of animals and flowers to landscapes of their school grounds and New York City. As part of Class Collage, which has continued through

Collage by Oak Hall student Ji Won

February, participants use photo editing tools to demonstrate and compare cultural outlooks. In this project, students illustrated "student life". The collages from Ponzio's students included

images of hamburgers, sports, aliens, and cars. Nukus students created illustrations which displayed the Uzbek flag, agriculture, the president, and national maps. The students then inquired further about the themes depicted in the collages. The Florida students asked about Uzbekistan fruit and historical leaders, while the Nukus participants asked about their partners' trees and jewelry. Nukus School No. 11 created a website about the project, located at http://nukus11.connect.uz/classcollage/collages.php.

Collage by Ilxam Allambergenov, a 9th grade student at Nukus School No. 11

"I liked the opportunity to interact with kids our age in another part of the world," reflected Oak Hall senior Moriah Goldfarb. "It helped make us more aware that there are kids like us going through the same things we are, halfway around the world." Classmate Dresdner Schenker agreed. "It has been very interesting learning about the history and culture of another country that many of us have never heard of before," he said.

Teacher Ponzio concurs. "In light of the present day conflicts our nation finds itself involved in, I feel it is beneficial for my students to productively interact and befriend their counterparts in the predominantly Islamic society of Uzbekistan," he wrote. "It is my hope that by getting to know one another, we are planting a seed of peace and understanding between our two cultures."

Most recently, Ponzio's second semester class has started a National Cuisines project with Bulakbashi School No. 43, in the Andijan oblast. During the introduction stage, students have posted pictures of their favorite pastimes while Andijan students posted links to their school's many project websites. Next, the groups will exchange recipes of traditional local foods.

Through this online exchange, Global Connections is helping students from both the US and Uzbekistan not only learn about each other's countries, but see past the surface and begin to understand the differences that make them unique.

Uchkuprik School Hosts Friendship Fair

Elementary School teacher Alfiya Davlekanova and her first grade students present about Canada

From January 4 to 7, **Uchkuprik School No. 28** hosted more than 50 visitors from the school community for the **Friendship Fair**, organized by exchange alumna and school principal, **Zamira Yuldasheva**. Participants and guests from three neighboring schools had the opportunity to learn in depth about different cultures in the world. To prepare for the event students spent much of November and December using their Global Connections computer classroom to research their projects.

"After participating in the African Fair in April, 2005, at **Ferghana School No. 40** we learned to conduct research, and decided to organize this kind of event in our school," said **Charoskhon Yuldasheva**, history teacher at Uchkuprik School No. 28. Beginning in November students and their teachers began searching the Internet for information on their selected countries. They used travel resources "Geo Tourism" (http://geotravel.ru) and "Pan Asia" (http://www.panasia.ru) to supplement their exhibitions. "We learned many new and exciting things. Students researching Pakistan learned that both the flag and state emblem consists of only green and white colors, and were surprised to discover that the white vertical stripe was added as a tribute to the non-Muslim minority," said Yuldasheva.

More than 150 first through ninth grade students took part in the exhibition and concert program. Guests were introduced to 24 countries, including the United States, Italy, Pakistan, and China, and had the opportunity to sample different national dishes such as a Canadian nut

cake with walnuts, Ukrainian round bread, and jambalaya. The concert followed that was comprised of student poems and ethnic dancing. **Mastura Ergasheva**, a correspondent covering the event for the local newspaper *Yangi Fargona* wrote, "Each guest felt as if they were in different country. This impression was created by the original decorations, national costumes, meals and presenters that greeted each guest in the language of the presenting country." In addition to all activities, each class sold sweets and raised funds to support the computer classroom.

The **Friendship Fair** provided a great opportunity for both for presenters and visitors to learn about different countries and broadened their knowledge in geography, history and sociology. With the use of their Global Connections computer classrooms, the students of **Uchkuprik School No. 28** will continue to expand both their knowledge and their horizons.

School Website "Pochemuchka" Gains International Acclaim

"Pochemuchka" is the most popular website in the "Leading Links" catalogue

On January 25, **Ablakim Jumamuratov**, a Global Connections trained teacher at **Nukus School No. 1**, along with the school's Web Design club achieved international acclaim by having their website, "**Pochemuchka**", rated number one on the Internet catalogue "Leading Links" (http://links.zerkalenok.ru/games). "Leading Links" is a popular Russian website that tracks and rates online educational resources. "Pochemuchka" (http://nukus1.connect.uz/vika), an online quiz, was recently reconstructed by Jumamuratov and the club using the PHP programming language to make the site more dynamic.

Since November Jumamuratov had been training with Global Connections staff to perfect his use of PHP. Afterward he immediately began applying his new knowledge to his school's website. Jumamuratov regularly updates the website of Nukus School No. 1 and creates educational pages for teachers to use in or out of the classroom. Many of the school's Web pages are the result of his work with the Web Design club. The club involves some of the center's most active students, including ninth grade student and **Tech Age Girl Anna Vaganyan** (http://taganna.freebox.ru/about_me.htm), 10th grade student **Abdunaim Mambetyarov**, and **Andrey Krilov**, a computer classroom volunteer. At present they are working on improving their skills in reconstructing the entire school website using PHP programming language capabilities.

Through the wise application of Global Connections training and their computer classroom, Nukus School No. 1 has once again demonstrated that it is possible to achieve international recognition and success. By continuing to find clever uses for their developing skills, School No.1's web club is assured of sustaining the benefits of their computer center.

Project Participants Prepare American Desserts

Fatima Abdulhakimova's tasty strawberry pie

For over a year, the **Global Connections National Cuisines and Traditions project** has been successful at bringing together US and Uzbekistani classes in fruitful cultural exchange, involving more than 25 schools throughout both countries. On January 15, a group of eight students from **Takhiatash School No. 7** and seven students from **Karshi School No. 12** separately baked new American desserts, the recipes for which were shared through online through the project. Starting in September 2005, in collaboration **West Feliciana High School in St. Francisville, Louisiana**, students introduced themselves to each other and shared recipes from their home countries. Students posted recipes of traditional dishes along with pictures and photographs, learned about the celebrations for which those meals are

cooked, practiced preparing each other's food, and shared their experiences on the project's forum site.

At the beginning of January, Takhiatash School No. 7 students and their English teacher **Ilmira Djumaniyazova** reviewed the recipes that their partners shared and decided to try "pecan candy". Since pecans can not be found in Uzbekistan, the students decided to replace them with locally-available walnuts. "The process of preparation was difficult since we didn't have any pecans. But we didn't let that stop us. In the end it was rather interesting since it was our first time preparing dishes from a western kitchen," said ninth grader **Kunduz Eshmuratova**.

Students from Karshi School No. 12 learned to bake fruit pie. With the help of their project coordinator, English teacher **Nadejda Salikhova**, they chose to bake a strawberry pie, based on a recipe posted by their project partners. "This pie was very delicious and nice. When I made it for my parents they were very surprised that American food could be so tasty," recalled **Fatima**, a seventh grade student from Karshi.

The **National Cuisines and Traditions project** has proven to be an exciting way to introduce students to new cultures and build a variety of skills while experiencing the joys and rewards of cooking.

Global Connections Teachers Demonstrate Integration of Internet Resources

Karshi School No. 12, seventh-grade students at the lesson "My Uzbekistan"

On January 3, **Karshi School No. 34** hosted 15 teachers from the Karshi regional school district at the **"Month of English" workshop**, demonstrating and promoting Internet-assisted teaching strategies developed through two years of participation in Global Connections. The workshop is an annual event for each school district in Uzbekistan. This year the region held conferences, workshops, and seminars designed to improve the qualifications of teachers, opportunities to exchange methodological materials, and build a teachers' network.

School No. 34 has been one of the most active schools in developing Internet resources for the classroom. Three experienced Global Connections teachers, **Natalya Khamidova, Kamila Turabaeva, and Shakhnoza Gulomova**, demonstrated lessons that included interactive teaching methods and instruction on how to integrate information technology into the English curriculum. Khamidova demonstrated her lesson for seventh graders on the topic **"My Uzbekistan."** For this lesson, groups of students created poster presentations based on information gathered from Internet research. Turaeva presented her eighth grade lesson **"Think Globally and Act Locally"** on ecological problems and solutions. First, students learned about issues such as air pollution, global warming, and ozone depletion from the **United Nations Environmental Program** site "Pachamama" (http://www.unep.org/geo2000/pacha/atmos/index.htm), then brainstormed and read about ecological activities undertaken by children throughout the world. Students then came up with ways of applying these lessons to problems in their own community.

Karshi school district English teachers left the workshop with valuable information about the integration of Internet resources into everyday lessons. Through the work of outstanding teachers like Khamidova, Turabaeva, and Gulomova, Global Connections will continue to encourage future teachers to effectively bring modern technology to the classroom.

Teacher's Corner

Teachers in all the Global Connections regions have been actively using their Global Connections computer classrooms to invigorate their lesson plans and connect with the community. Below are some examples of their activities:

- Four students from **Ferghana School No. 40**, 11th grade students **Liliya Mukhametova** and **Dilnoza Nuralieva** and 10th grade students **Elena Efimenko** and **Diana Mustafaeva** achieved first place in the **Annual Subject Olympiads** hosted by the Ferghana Regional Retraining Institute. Their teachers **Alexandra Snitkina** and **Klara Karimova**, prepared the students for the Olympiad by using the Internet resources at their school's **Global Connections computer classroom**. Most frequently, they used the informational portal "Gramota.ru" (http://learning-russian.gramota.ru/idictation.html), allowing the students to practice sample tasks and master their Russian grammar. Students that won at the national level received a full scholarship to the university of their choice.

- On January 18, **Ekaterina Zelenskaya**, a **Nukus School No. 1** Russian teacher and **Global Connections US exchange trip alumna**, presented a report on integrating Internet resources into lessons at the first conference on Russian and Literature, organized by Nukus's Russian Cultural Center, Russian Foreign Center and Nukus State Pedagogical Institute. The conference hosted more than 100 students and teachers with the aim to discuss the role of Russian and new methods of teaching Russian both as a native language and as a second language. In her report **Zelenskaya** shared the new Internet resources she uses in her class including "I teach Russian" (http://rus.1september.ru/urok/).

- Throughout January, **Karshi Academic Lyceum** computer science teacher, **Ahmadjon Kodirov**, conducted computer lessons for 10th grade students on graphics software in preparation for the **Tech Age Girls 2** project competition. The students learned to edit photographs and create blogs, which were posted on http://connectuz.net/blog, as part of their entries to the contest. As a result of his trainings, 10 students sent applications to participate in the contest and have been updating their blogs.

Teachers' Workshop

Teachers' Workshop creates educational resources disseminating the experience of teachers and educational institutions. The workshop aims to provide encouragement for teachers and teaching staff that use modern, creative teaching methodology and Internet technology; support educational initiative and disseminate advanced experience in using the educational opportunities of the Internet; and increase the available curricular resources developed by Uzbekistan's teachers.

- On January 3, **Ahmadjon Kadirov**, a **Karshi Nuristan Lyceum** computer science teacher, published the work he submitted to the **Teacher's Workshop** contest on his personal website (http://nuristan.connect.uz/kodirov/websayt.html). His project fills a key need by serving as an Uzbek Latin manual for using important computer applications. Many young Uzbeks are learning their language in the new Latin alphabet, making obsolete older pedagogical texts. This resource gives students access to

Teacher's Workshop Project Website by Computer Science teacher Ahmadjon Kodirov

learning materials for skills that would otherwise be unavailable.

- On January 31, **Bulakbashi School No. 43** economics teacher, **Tulkinjon Sotvoldiev** in collaboration with school principal **Fayzullo Buvamatov**, finished his second project for **Teachers' Workshop** contest on the topic **"Textbook for the essentials of Computer Science and computer techniques for the sixth grade."** Due to lack of proper textbooks, teachers have difficulties in teaching this required subject. Sotvoldiev started this pilot project in September 1, 2006 with the approval of the Ministry of Public Education, who recognized the value of his school's Global Connections Internet-connected classroom. According to the state standards, sixth grade students should complete 34 hours of computer classes per year and should master Microsoft Word. In preparing his book, Sotvoldiev used the site "Microsoft Office Online" (http://office.microsoft.com/ru-ru/assistance/CH790018161049.aspx). "Our school has been chosen as an experimental school by the Ministry of Public Education to try new teaching methods and curricula in computer science. Thanks to the **Global Connections computer classroom** and access to the Internet, we have enough experience and resources to implement them."

Fundraising Update

- From December 1 to January 31, **Namangan School No. 48** raised money to support their **Global Connections computer classroom** by publishing and selling a school newspaper. From the beginning of December 2005, 15 ninth and tenth grade students worked on publishing the school newspaper under the supervision of the computer science teacher **Igor Ribyanov**. The editorial group locates information for students from sites www.lenta.ru and www.peoples.ru, then discusses and jointly approves final articles. In December, the students published four issues totaling 400 copies and in January, three totaling 300 copies. A portion of the funds raised were used to fix a monitor and refill the printer. The remainder will be used for other classroom needs.

Tech Age Girls Corner

The Tech Age Girls (TAG) project addresses the lack of skilled women in the IT field by providing encouragement and training to some of the most promising young female computer specialists. By guiding a group of girls through a process in which they will have the chance to advance their skills, learn from successful female leaders, and develop their own projects, participants gain a lead on entering one of the most promising fields in the world economy.

- From January 4 to 24, TAG alumna **Aziza Mirsalimova**, a freshman at the **Andijan College of Communications**, trained three **Andijan School No. 2** students on how to create blogs, and distributed information about the **Tech Age Girls 2** contest. As a result of her efforts 23 girls applied to participate in the contest.

- Over the last year TAG alumna **Nastya Buchok**, an eighth grader at **Nukus School No. 32**, has been training fifth through ninth grade students on effective use of HTML programming language and graphics software. On January 31, as a result of her training, a group of students published the website "The Catastrophe of the Aral Sea" (http://techage-girls.connect.uz/nbuchok/aral/r.htm). Their site discusses the problem of the disappearing Aral Sea and its effects on the region. The students are continuing to work on adding new information to the site.

- On January 6, **Nastya Buchok** conducted a picture contest among fifth grade students entitled "IT and Me." The contest aimed to help students think more about computers and their role in students' lives. Buchok, an avid artist, wanted to teach students to be able to express their understanding of the usage of computers in preparing home assignments and how the Internet can help them achieve better results both academically and personally.